

Mary Ehrenworth
Vicki Vinton

THE POWER OF GRAMMAR

Unconventional
Approaches to
the Conventions
of Language

MWSD CURRICULUM

Contents

Chapter One 1

Introduction: Teaching Grammar to Achieve Power, Beauty, and Voice

In this chapter we describe the theoretical and practical roots of this study, how our research began, and how it grew to encompass our current understanding of grammar's influence on power, beauty, and voice. We examine the relationship between grammar codes and a culture of power and the implications of this relationship for instruction.

Chapter Two 15

Putting Conventions in Our In-Tray: Planning Grammar Curriculum

This chapter offers ways to plan grammar lessons and grammar curriculum. We introduce direct instruction, inquiry, and apprenticeship. We look at some individual lessons that model direct instruction and some case studies in inquiry and apprenticeship. We consider how grammar instruction fits in writing process and writing workshop, and we offer some yearlong plans.

Chapter Three 49

Teaching Usage: Punctuation, Conventions, Style

Here we study the understandings of usage (proper or common conventions) we consider most significant to teachers and student writers. We consider more deeply the ways that usage is linked to power. We explore more intimately the role of unsafe stories in our instruction and the significance of crafting our own examples as we come to understand usage. We offer a text-in-process as one in which we may investigate the implications of grammatical decisions on the development of the story and the writer.

Chapter Four 87

Love and Sedition: Getting Intimate with Grammar by Breaking the Rules

In this chapter we consider what happens when writers break the rules. We follow student writers as they encounter professional writers who abandon usage to achieve diverse purposes. We study closely the relationship between form and

content as these students conduct an inquiry, and we study the processes of classroom inquiry. We investigate the impact on student writing of this new knowledge and the implications for our understandings of grammar and for our teaching.

Chapter Five 127

The Sentence and the Apprentice

Chapter 5 presents student writers apprenticing themselves to published authors at the sentence level. We study how to read a sentence closely and parse it for meaning. We consider the internal forms of sentence construction. We see students experimenting with style, and we see the impact on voice. And we describe how to organize apprenticeship in the classroom.

Afterword 159

As an Afterword, we offer our closing thoughts, including some ideas for future work, some ways to bring this work not only into our classrooms but into our lives as readers and writers, and some hopes for students and teachers.

Appendices 171

The appendices include an exploration of usage and an accompanying narrative that demonstrates the conventions described.

Appendix A: Usage Lessons 171

Appendix B: A Narrative of Conventions and Desire 183

Acknowledgments 185

Bibliography 187

Index 193